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United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Third Meeting of the Advisory Group
of the Industrial and Technological Information Bank (INTIB)

Vienna, Austria, 13-17 March 1989

REPORT*

* This document has not been edited.

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CONTENTS

I. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	3
II. INTRODUCTION	6
III. WORKING SESSIONS	8
IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT	10
V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	10
Annexes	
I. List of participants and observers	11
II. Meeting programme	16
III. List of documents and country papers	18

I. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTIB in the 1990s

1. The Advisory Group was of the opinion that the 1990s will be characterized by further development of industrial and technological information activities, better and more extensive use of modern information technologies, broadening of national and international information markets and more competition within the information environment.

2. The Group acknowledged current INTIB activities, assessed the new initiatives taken by the Industrial and Technological Information Programme and endorsed the recommendations of the previous INTIB Advisory Group meetings and workshops.

3. The Group agreed that substantial efforts should be made to improve the industrial information activities of UNIDO to meet the growing requirements of users at national, regional and international levels. Evaluation of users' information needs in developing countries was considered crucial.

4. The Group stated that UNIDO/INTIB activities in several cases have been affected by problems that were partially dependent on the local situation and to an extent linked to inadequate infrastructure, external support and a lack of trained manpower.

5. A concerted approach needs to be made at the UN level to examine compatibility among various UN and external databases. Where such compatibility does not exist, techniques such as gateways, menu driven interfaces, expert systems (artificial intelligence), conversion tools etc. should be employed.

6. Recognizing that international communications networks are becoming increasingly important to developing countries and that there are inherent constraints to the establishment of telecommunications linkages, the Group urges the relevant UN system organizations to make a concerted high level approach to developing countries, as yet unconnected, to consider accessing external information sources through the UN system.

RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO MEMBER STATES

1. Member States may consider ways to improve awareness of the importance of industrial information in the development process.

2. National industrial and technological information authorities are invited to consider the promotion and impact of local INTIB services and products for industrial growth.

3. Existing information resources should be better exploited and made available to a wider range of users. Modes of intensive exploitation and marketing of local resources should be developed.

4. The industrial information provided by INTIB should be repackaged and

tailored to the local needs and market requirements, where possible.

5. The location of the INTIB national focal point (NFP) is of prime importance for its efficient and effective operation. It should, therefore, be appropriately selected and effort should be made to place it within its national industrial information systems and suitably link it to other information systems in the country.

6. Local authorities should consider the need for human resources development in order to use advanced information technologies effectively. UNIDO and the regional centres have also an important role to play in this respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

1. Telecommunications and information dissemination systems in some developing countries for use of databases and other information services, in general, and INTIB systems in particular, are at present inadequate. UNIDO in co-operation with external sponsors should

(a) assist in setting-up packet switching telecommunications nodes; and

(b) explore the possibility of sharing telecommunications costs for use of INTIB services at least for the initial phase.

2. Modern tools for information processing and transmission, e.g. diskettes, tapes, CD-ROM, telefax and others, will be necessary to improve the industrial and technological information services in developing countries, for which external assistance would be required.

3. User-friendly personal computer oriented turn-key solutions, such as menu driven interfaces, design of information systems, hardware, software, training etc., may be introduced to accelerate the process of establishing and/or strengthening the activities of NFPs.

4. Human resources must be developed for the specialized jobs in the field of industrial, technological and business information.

5. The usefulness of industrial and technological information is linked not only to the provision of bibliographic and factual information but also to advisory services or extension services to end-users. Such advice will be mainly linked to technological, business and legal support.

6. Efforts in developing countries to promote co-operation in the field of industrial and technological information should be supported within the framework of Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries (TCDC).

RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO UNIDO SECRETARIAT

1. UNIDO should continue to encourage and aid, where possible, the development of national industrial information infrastructure(s) in developing countries.

2. Technical co-operation projects should be initiated for the improvement of INTIB information activities. Important ones are:

- Model for better exploitation and marketing of local information resources;
- Study of inter-linkages between market, small and medium enterprises and research;
- Availability of business information for small and medium enterprises;
- UNIDO/INTIB referral system and networking;
- Establishment of an International Technology Information Centre;
- Establishment of advisory services for helping NFPs and end-users in the handling of industrial, technological and commercial information.

UNIDO may take steps to formulate and evaluate the above projects with the support of external experts, when necessary.

3. UNIDO/INTIB should support national efforts for database development and operation with special emphasis on its national focal points programme.

4. The products and services of industrial information are increasingly commercially oriented. External assistance would, therefore, be required to have access to public and commercial databases. An examination of appropriate financial support mechanisms to this end should be undertaken by UNIDO.

5. UNIDO should continue co-operation with other industrial and technogical information agencies with a view to providing access to their databases in a most favourable way.

6. UNIDO/INTIB should establish an inventory of relevant existing information sources world-wide and conduct an assessment of these sources.

7. UNIDO should take into account the changes in economic and industrial trends that are taking place and adjust the industrial information services it provides, to suit such changes;

8. The information systems of NFPs and UNIDO should be compatible with each other and with external information systems that are being used, to the greatest extent possible. This would be desirable in order to facilitate information exchange through the global INTIB network;

9. INTIB should monitor the evolution of new information technologies and should encourage the use of feasible alternatives for information processing, e.g. CD-ROM, on-line networking, telefax, electronic mail, etc., taking into consideration their economic viability in developing countries.

10. The Computerized Documentation System (CDS)/Integrated Scientific Information System (ISIS) – CDS/ISIS – is a widely accepted menu-driven generalized Information Storage Retrieval System, particularly suitable for handling small and medium size applications. It is distributed free of charge to institutions in developing countries by UNESCO. A formal and active

interaction should be developed between UNIDO/INTIB and UNESCO, the software producer, for harmoniz: g new developments and improvements keeping in view the NFPs' data processing needs. At the same time UNIDO should organize, in co-operation with UNESCO, an INTIB-based international ISIS users group, taking into consideration existing regional or national ISIS users groups, where applicable.

11. UNIDO/INTIB should not lose sight of traditional methods of information dissemination such as printed outputs, user documentation, abstract materials, thesauri etc.

12. UNIDO, in close co-operation with other international agencies, should identify institutions that maintain environment-related databases. It was noted that WHO (Regional office for Europe) would be willing to provide UNIDO with its environmental health series and officially distributed reports from its environmental health information system meetings. A working group meeting might be organized by UNIDO to discuss common approaches to a network for exchange and dissemination of information for the reduction of environmental pollution with specific reference to industrial technology, taking into account existing information systems and networks.

13. The Group acknowledged with satisfaction the offers made by several countries and regional centres in providing various training courses for INTIB users and these could be promoted through the "*INTIB Net*" newsletter and other media;

14. UNIDO should formulate a detailed human resource development programme for INTIB national focal points based on the offers made by the member countries and regional centres;

15. The Group decided that UNIDO should continue to provide information free of charge to developing countries, while acknowledging, in principle,that its products and information services could be charged for. An investigation should be made of a possible charging system for end-users who are likely to make commercial use of the information provided by UNIDO.

16. UNIDO should establish and/or strengthen linkages with other international, regional and national organizations engaged in similar activities, through the exchange of material and expertise and the implementation of complementary programmes and projects.

II. INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 31/183 on the establishment of a network for the exchange of technological information, particularly para 9, concerning the establishment of the Industrial and Technological Information Bank (INTIB) in UNIDO, and UNIDO Industrial

Development Board (IDB) Resolution 47(XI). The Vienna programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development also stressed the importance of strengthening the national technological information capabilities of developing countries.

In this connection, during the past nine years, UNIDO has carried out a number of action-oriented activities to facilitate and accelerate a greater flow of information to INTIB users. In the context of recommendations of the Advisory Group made in its second meeting, UNIDO has reoriented the activities of INTIB during the last 3 years. They include:

- Generation of industrial information through better and more efficient use of the existing information systems in the organization (INDIS (IDA/LINK), Energy Information System (EIS), TIES, INPRIS);
- Improvement of the Industrial Inquiry Service with greater emphasis on networking through establishing and supporting INTIB National Focal Points and Nodes;
- Introduction of modern data processing techniques in INTIB and its NFPs and training staff in their effective use;
- Establishment and development of specific databases, inter-alia CLEANTEC DATA for environmental technologies and Technology Supply Database for industrial technologies;
- Incorporation of the INTIB concept in UNIDO's Technical Assistance Programme to provide assistance in formulating national industrial information policies, building-up and strengthening national and regional information infrastructures and networks, promoting new information technologies, such as on-line connections and use of electronic mail, creating industrial databanks, and training and up-grading information specialists.

Objective:

The objective of the Third Meeting of an Advisory Group for INTIB was to bring together experts to review the elements of an action programme to re-orient the activities of INTIB in the light of the conclusions of the Second INTIB Advisory Group Meeting.

The meeting discussed the following themes:

(1) Review of INTIB's activities following its re-orientation and approval of the Industrial and Technological Information Programme;

(2) Operation of the INTIB (Regional and National Focal Points) network, modus operandi of focal points and INTIB global network project proposal;

(3) Co-ordination and co-operation between INTIB and providers of other UN and external data bases for effective utilization of existing technological resources for INTIB end users with emphasis on computerized networking for environmental technology;

(4) Review and finalize INTIB's human resource development programme based on concrete proposals from various member countries; and

(5) Vision for INTIB in the 1990s.

Organization

The Advisory Group Meeting was attended by 55 participants from various member countries, international organizations, observers and UNIDO consultants.

Delivering the welcome address on behalf of the Director-General of UNIDO, the Deputy-Director General, Department for Industrial Promotion, Consultations and Technology, described the basic thrust and strategy of UNIDO and more particularly the role that is envisaged for industrial and technological information. He referred to the significant changes taking place in industry as it gradually transforms from a material-based to an information- or knowledge-based activity. In this context, therefore, collection and dissemination of industrial and technological information, for which INTIB has the primary responsibility, becomes a vital pre-requisite for success. He commended the work being done by INTIB in the field of industrial and technological information. He mentioned that the meeting of the INTIB Advisory Group of experts was timely and appropriate to chart a course for the Bank's activities to be in line with UNIDO's overall strategy for the next few years as laid down in the medium-term plan for 1990–1995.

Election of officers

The meeting was invited to elect Chairmen for the meeting, Panels I and II, and a rapporteur. The meeting unanimously elected:

1. Chairman for the meeting and Panel I: Professor Adam Wysocki, Adviser, Institute for Scientific, Technical and Economic Information, Poland

2. Chairman for Panel II: Mr. P. Bakonyi, Deputy Director, Computer Automation Institute, Hungary

3. Rapporteur: Mr. Vinay Kumar, Industrial Adviser, Directorate General of Technical Development, Ministry of Industry, India

III. WORKING SESSIONS

Four papers were presented in the plenary session. The first paper related to an overview of INTIB's activities and future plan of action. The second paper on enhancing the information flow within and to developing countries described the necessary informatics infrastructure for satisfactory computerized networking. The next paper stressed the important role of INTIB/UNIDO in the establishment of a global network for scientific and technological information. The last paper gave information on the various methods of telecommunication used by INTIB and presented a comparative analysis.

After the plenary session, the Group split into two panels for intensive discussions.

- Panel I: INTIB in the 1990s
- Panel II: Computerized networking (with emphasis on environmental technology)

In Panel I nine reports were presented. These related to the scenarios in different regions and guidelines for establishment of NFPs, training in the area of information management, project proposals made in the previous advisory group meetings and other INTIB fora. The reports in respect of regional situations highlighted the activities of the International Centre for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI) as INTIB's regional service center, technology information scenario in Africa through the ARCT and the current status and development opportunities for industrial information resources and services in the Latin America and the Caribbean regions by ECLAC. The paper on a guide to the establishment of INTIB national focal points dealt with various aspects relating to the establishment and or strengthening of the effectiveness of national focal points. The papers on training and educational aspects referred to the new trends in those areas and emphasized the importance of this vital input for the success of any information system. Offers of training facilities were also made. The paper on extensive exploitation of information resources referred to projects to be taken up that were based on the previous recommendations of UNIDO/INTIB meetings. A paper on the use of industrial, technological and business information by enterprises in developing countries referred to a project proposal on increasing the efficiency of information use by enterprises in developing countries.

In panel II, six presentations were made. The first presentation highlighted a MicroCaires based information system for project promotion in ACP countries. The second presentation was on the FACTS database, which contains approximately 15,000 records on industrial accidents. FACTS also holds information in terms of 60,000 pages microfiches. A presentation on the UN Network system gave background information on the DialCom for electronic mail, as currently utilized by various UN offices. Details were provided on the special features of DialCom and its cost-effectiveness over conventional methods like telex. The next presentation described the metallurgical database, METADEX, which has about 840,000 records on the material properties. It was pointed out that considerable emphasis should be given to the printed form of information apart from the modern electronic storage methods. The next presentation highlighted the role of clean technology databases for influencing industry to adopt environmentally sound technologies. The sixth presentation entitled "Technical Information at Nippon Steel Corporation" highlighted the extensive and effective use of a technical information system to improve corporate efficiency. The Advisory Group also had a meeting with the ACC Task Force on Science and Technology for

Development. They were appraised of the conclusions arrived at by the Group, particularly those requiring external assistance. The conclusions may provide useful input for the working of the Task Force.

The Advisory Group discussed the recommendations of both the panels. Based on those discussions, final recommendations were formulated.

Presentations

Presentations were made on:

- UNIDO/IBM Electronic Mail Communication Network and other networks used by INTIB;
- INTIB databases (OFFR/REQT/VENT/IDA/IDAA/INQ/INECA/CLEANTEC DATA/NODE/RESEARCH INSTITUTE DIRECTORIES);
- The use of electronic publishing techniques in INTIB, in particular the linkage of micro CDS-ISIS and desk top publishing software to produce typeset output directly from databases;
- Various communication packages and databases by participants;

A list of documents and country papers appears in Annex III.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

After detailed discussions, the meeting adopted the Report. The meeting made a strong recommendation to UNIDO and the Member States for early implementation of the activities suggested at the meeting.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The meeting expressed its deep appreciation for the efforts made by UNIDO for the organization of the meeting and offered special thanks to UNIDO for providing excellent host facilities.

ANNEX I – List of participants and observers

Participants

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Annex II – Meeting Programme

Monday, 13 March 1989

08.30–09.15 Registration

09.30–10.00 Opening ceremony

Welcome speech on behalf of Mr. Domingo L. Siazon, Jr. Director-General, UNIDO

10.30–10.45 Election of Chairman/Plenary Rapporteur and two panel leaders Panel I: INTIB in the 1990s and Panel II: Computerized Networking (with emphasis on environmental technology)

10.45–12.30 Presentations

1. INTIB Programme: an Overview - UNIDO Secretariat paper

2. Enhancing the Information Flow within and to Developing Countries – UNIDO Issue Paper

3. Role of INTIB in the Establishment of a Global Network for Scientific and Technical Information by Prof. R. Seiful-Mulukov

4. INTIB Telecommunications by Ms. D. Patoprsty

Discussion

14.30–17.00 Short presentation of papers by participants at panels and discussions

Tuesday, 14 March 1989

09.30–12.30 Panel discussions (continued)

14.30–17.00 Panel discussions (continued)

Wednesday, 15 March 1989

09.30–11.00 Preparation of panel findings

11.30–13.00 Joint session with ACC Task Force on Science and Technology

Presentation of the panels findings

14.30–17.00 Discussion of Panel I findings at plenary session

Thursday, 16 March 1989

09.30–12.30 Preparation of the final report Hands-on sessions and demonstration of INTIB databases, electronic and desk-top publishing, and telecommunication networks

14.30–17.00 Adoption of the report

Closing address by the Deputy Director-General, Department for Industrial Promotion, Consultations and Technology

Friday, 17 March 1989

09.00–17.00 Individual discussions with meeting participants on possible technical cooperation projects and mutual programmes

14.30–17.00 Hands-on sessions and demonstration of INTIB databases, electronic and desk-top publishing, and telecommunication networks (continued)

Annex III – List of documents

1 Aide-Memoire

2 Meeting programme

3 List of participants

4 INTIB Programme: An overview UNIDO Secretariat paper (ID/WG.486/1)

5 Enhancing the information flow within and to developing countries - UNIDO Issue Paper (ID/WG.486/2)

6 Role of INTIB in the establishment of a Global Network for Scientific and Technical Information by Prof. R. Seiful-Mulukov

7 Intensive exploitation of information resources for small and medium size industrial enterprises by Prof. A. Wysocki

8 A guide to establishment of INTIB's national focal points by Mr. V. Kumar

9 The ICSTI activities as INTIB regional focal point by Mr. A. Butrimenko

10 Information resources management training in companies by Ms. R. Launo and Ms. M. Karivalo

10A IAS proposals on global network project and human resources development by Mr. Y.A. Savostitski and Y.A. Fontanov

11 Strengthening technology and industrial information in developing countries – a project proposal

12 Summary report of the Advisory Group to UNEP on "low- and non-waste technologies" by UNEP/IEO

13 The AGRIS system by IAEA

14 FACTS – A database for industrial safety by Mr. L.J.B. Koehorst

15 Technical information system at Nippon Steel Corporation by Mr. T. Okano

16 Materials information – Its products and databases by Mr. M. Furneaux

17 Computerized information retrieval: the experience of the Centre for the Development of Industry(CDI) by Mr. B. Adenaike

18 Background on LNWT database at CESE, IIT Bombay and an approach towards computerized networking of information on environmental technologies by Mr. P.M. Modak

19 Elements of the role of informatics in the health-for-all-policy by WHO

20 ECLAC Data bases: A short guide to its information resources and procedures by ECLAC/CLADES

21 The insertion of an international industrial information system in the

information networking environment of Latin America and the Caribbean by Mr. J. Cubillo

22 FAO's contribution to a better flow of scientific and technical information for agricultural development by Mr. E.K. Samaha

23 NETT: A network for environmental technology transfer by Mr. J.E. Matty

24 The United Nations electronic mail network system by Ms. A. Cannata